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ABSTRACT

Three articles are presented which concern college reading instruction. Karen Pelz describes an intensive approach to teaching reading and writing which entails: (1) special classes for underprepared students; (2) standard administration of freshman reading tests; (3) teaching reading and writing together; (4) using the same instructor to teach Basic English and Analytical Reading employing a related syllabus and complementary materials; (5) gearing the instructional approach to the students' actual level rather than to an expected level; (6) coordination with related student services; and (7) emphasizing the value of reading and writing. In another article, Michael Kahn provides suggestions for effective notetaking, which outline student and teacher responsibilities, use of abbreviations and short hand notation, paraphrasing, and determining the main idea and supporting details from lectures and texts. In the third paper, Robert C. Gerace discusses the use of videotapes in the improvement of comprehension. The videotape, "The Fine Art of Seeing," and related materials which introduce in layman's terms the techniques employed by artists in the creation of a painting, are examined as aids in fostering motivation and achievement in humanities courses. Gerace considers the usefulness of relying upon the text for content and the tape for appreciation of technique. (MB)

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FORUM FOR READING

The Journal for Two-Year College Reading Teachers (Special Interest Group/International Reading Association)

Volume 8, No. 2 April, 1978

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TEXTBOOK REVIEWS

Kent Smith
Bangor Community College

Idea Power for Reading Comprehension. Lee Vogel Kolzow. Workbook. 315 pp. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976.

Reading Power and Study Skills for College Work. Carl A. Lefevre and Helen E. Lefevre. Workbook. 241 pp. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1978.

Not surprisingly, textbooks currently available to community college reading teachers vary considerably in quality. Many of the texts are nothing more than a potpourri of timed reading selections that are followed by multiple-choice questions; some texts include exercises on every conceivable reading skill, resulting in a superficial treatment of each. But fortunately there are also some truly helpful textbooks on the market for community college reading students. Kolzow's text and the Lefevres' text are among that number; both texts are well-conceived and sharply focused.

Kolzow only has this instructional objective in mind for her text: to teach students a systematic process

for comprehending content-area material. In fact, the Idea in the title of the text is actually an acronym formed by the first letter of each step in the comprehension process: I-identify who or what the paragraph is about; D-define the topic idea; E-expand the topic idea to include the important details; A-articulate a statement of the author's complete idea. After learning each step in the process by working with single paragraphs, students then use it in reading longer selections. The material, all of it expository, ranges from a fourth grade to a college reading level. Students are provided thorough explanations throughout the text. Idea Power for Reading Comprehension, then, deals exclusively and commendably with the most important reading skill of all - comprehension.

The Lefevres' Reading Power and Study Skills for College Work touches more bases than Kolzow's text; the book contains five chapters concerned with study skills, comprehension, word study, reading flexibility, and library skills. Despite its breadth, this text provides extensive coverage in each area. Sections on studying illustrated materials and developing dictionary skills are particularly noteworthy.

Idea Power for Reading Comprehension and Reading Power and Study Skills for College Work are not texts for community college students who have major reading problems or who are poorly motivated; these texts are difficult and require a tremendous amount of work. But for students who are fairly capable readers and who are really serious about wanting to succeed in college, then these texts are unquestionably appropriate for them.

AN INTENSIVE APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF READING AND WRITING

Karen Pelz
Dartmouth College

Within the past few years there has been a lot of talk about the ability--or inability--of college students to read and write at a college level. Several years ago the City University of New York made headlines when it instituted a requirement that its students be able to read at an eighth grade level; large numbers of people, mostly but not only those outside the realm of university teaching, were apparently shocked to discover that such a requirement would actually prohibit some students currently attending college from meeting the new entrance requirements. The recent announcement of the ten year decline in verbal scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test was another severe jolt to the American public, or at least that sector of it that is interested in public education! All that money spent on expensive schools, and still Johnny and Jennie can't read and write. The past two years especially have heard the phrase "back to basics" echoed from primary schools in Iowa to the hallowed halls of ivy in the eastern establishment colleges. A recent Florida decision to require basic skills in reading and mathematics sent a number of students scurrying off to other schools in neighboring states after a significant number of high school juniors and seniors failed to pass the required tests.

From the point of view of college teachers of English, it is probably futile to speculate on the causes of this "decline," if indeed it is a decline, in verbal ability of students who enter college. There are people who should be worrying about causes, and foremost among them are the people who teach education courses in our colleges and

what they should do. In fact, the whole issue of what education is meant to accomplish really hasn't been resolved, and it is partially because ultimately people don't regard education as nearly as important as business, medicine, or even politics. States that have legislated against teacher strikes, such as New York, for example, where the Taylor Law prohibits teachers at any level from striking, seem to have as their underlying concern not the education that the students will miss if the teachers go on strike, but the fact that all those hot blooded adolescents will be roaming the streets with nothing to do but smoke dope and get into trouble, or, God forbid, that the kids will actually be home those eight hours a day that they are usually in school, thus interrupting Mom and Dad's customary routine. Such issues as these are, though they seem disparate, relate to the so-called "decline" in education. And we could cite more "causes" for this phenomenon, in fact, lots of contradictory causes that have been mentioned by people all over the country: either the classrooms are too stifling and authoritarian, or the new open classrooms cause such chaos that no one can learn anything; either education is still too traditional to be relevant to today's students, or we have given up the basics and are teaching nothing but fad courses like women's studies and "Personal Growth"; either not enough money is available for school building programs, or we have spent too much money on fancy buildings; either teachers are underpaid and overworked, or teachers are materialistic, moneygrubbing lazy people who only work nine months of the year anyway and yet want to be paid a full year's salary. These debates are endless, and they are not really new. For the man or woman teaching at the college level, it seems pointless and merely frustrating to enter into them at all.

For it is not ultimately with causes that the college teacher of English must deal: it is with symptoms. The causes must be left to teachers of teachers, school administrators and boards of education. If any of them come to us to ask us what it is that the students need to know, then surely we can be of some help. That seems, however, to happen rarely. And in the meanwhile, we are left attempting to teach college English, or what we have traditionally thought of as college English, to many students who read at the eighth grade level (or perhaps even below), who cannot write a complete sentence and certainly never heard of the notion that apostrophes are supposed to be used to form possessives, who have never on their own read anything in literature more sophisticated than "My Darling, My Hamburger," and whose exposure to the so-called "classics" is limited to Macbeth and Great Expectations, both of which they hated, neither of which they understood, and which have probably turned them against the notion of ever reading a book for pleasure; and who, when reading an essay, can't really tell the difference between the main idea and a supporting detail.

Regardless of the fact that things seem to be worse now than they were 20 years ago, or ten years ago, or even, perhaps, five years ago, before the enrollment crunch began in earnest and colleges began admitting students they formerly would have turned away or foisted off on the open-door community colleges, the truth of the matter probably is that public education has never taught adequate skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic to all--or perhaps even most--of its students. It seems worse now than before because now we are seeing in the college classroom students who previously would not have gone to college, the bottom half, the bottom third, the bottom of the high school classes rather than the cream skimmed off the top. And it has been

an obvious mistake to believe that reading instruction is no longer necessary once students reach their junior high school years. True, the brighter students seem to do all right without it, although every year I am amazed at bright students at Dartmouth who are struggling along with reading skills that haven't been appropriate since they left fact-oriented education in junior high school. But the brighter students have generally either somehow "caught on" and been able to adapt their reading techniques to new situations or have been able to compensate in some way for their lack of reading skills. While these brighter students made up the bulk of our college classes, there seemed to be no necessity to teach reading in college. Now, however, that population has changed, and more and more college teachers find themselves facing students who cannot read in any meaningful way the texts that they are required to deal with in college classes.

Related to the problem of reading, though it is not the same problem, is the problem of writing. It is not popular at the moment to denigrate the "back to basics" movement, but I doubt very much if going back to the teaching of Latin-based grammar and sentence diagramming is going to do anything to improve the writing skills of students in public schools. While it may be true that in that never-never land of once-upon-a-time such techniques produced people who could, at least, write a competent sentence, it is also true that the system left behind a lot of students who couldn't write--but who didn't really show up in large numbers, because they didn't go on to college where their writing would be evaluated, and who, despite the dire prophecies of English teachers across the country, managed to find professions where writing wasn't necessary, or where sloppy writing was either tolerated or not

noticed. And while college teachers of linguistics and structure of the language rhapsodize about how fascinating it all it, adolescents are bored stiff by grammar regardless of how sincere and well-intentioned or enthusiastic teachers of grammar may be. The world has changed since parsing sentences and memorizing rules about ablative absolutes were commonplace. Television has been a powerful influence on attention span, perception, values, and world view. It is hard to imagine a teacher in either an inner city school with overcrowded classrooms and violent students or an affluent suburb near any one of our major cities being able to use such methods on students whose lives are radically different from those of their parents and grandparents.

If the situation cannot be changed by the back-to-basics approach to reading and writing, and if the more "relevant" methods of progressive education and the open classroom have seemed equally unsuccessful, what, then, can the college teacher of English do to help compensate for the inadequate background of his/her students in reading and writing? Is all hope lost? Is it too late by the time these students get to college to actually help them with such basic problems? Is the patient terminal, or is there hope for a miracle cure that will solve his/her problems?

I believe that while the illness is probably chronic and endemic to American society, it is not a new illness on the scene but an old, previously unrecognized sickness that is difficult to treat but, with intensive care, can be relieved and even cured. There will be no miracle cure, for there are no guarantees. The course of treatment must be intensive, it may well be long term, perhaps even painful, and it will surely be expensive. But unless we are going to shrug our shoulders and

throw up our hands in dismay, and pull the plug on life-support systems being used on patients who are not terminally ill, I believe the patients can be saved, and what I would like now to describe is an intensive care program aimed at saving as many college students as possible from their verbal afflictions. For lack of a better term, these patients will from this point on be referred to as "underprepared students."

Ten Factors in Intensive Care

1. There must be special classes for underprepared students in which reading and writing can be taught. For reasons of morale, it is better to have these classes be special sections of the regular freshman English course rather than a special course with a different number. Freshman English should be a three-level course: remedial, regular, advanced (or basic, standard, honors, whatever designations seem most useful). Placement should be by a test that evaluates writing ability as well as reading and vocabulary. The SAT now has an essay section, and this may be useful, though that remains to be seen. It may be necessary to administer a short essay test during freshman week; this is a cumbersome but necessary component for placement--other tests are simply not accurate.

2. Reading tests should be administered as a standard part of freshman testing. Most college textbooks are standardized for a tenth grade reading level. Therefore, anyone who places below the tenth grade level on one of the standard reading tests should be placed in one of the special sections that will teach remedial reading and writing. If you find the standardized tests unsatisfactory or offensive (as I do), you may create your own tests from actual texts used at your college.

3. Because reading and writing are related verbal activities, they should be taught together. When I refer to "reading" here, I do not mean "literature." The usual model of freshman English is to teach writing about literature--plays, stories, novels, poetry, essays. I refer, on the other hand, to reading: any of the above, but looked at in a more basic way than we do when we analyze literature, plus excerpts from the textbooks students are actually using in their classes. Teaching reading and writing together can best be done through doubles classes. In the model I am proposing, for example, Freshman English would consist of Basic English, Standard English, and Honors English; Basic English placement would be on the basis of scores on the tests and reading and writing, and would also involve placement in a second course, which we might call Analytical Reading. Thus there would be three groups of students: those enrolled in Basic English and Analytical Reading (the underprepared students), those enrolled in Standard English, and those enrolled in Honors English. All courses could actually have the same number and title--e.g. Freshman English, but different section for the three different levels.

4. Basic English and Analytical Reading would have a common instructor and a related syllabus. Sections should be scheduled to meet back to back, for example, Basic English at 9:00, Analytical Reading at 10:00; the material of the two courses could thus be combined, though the student will get credit (and these must be credit courses) for two discrete classes.

5. The content of the two courses will complement each other. Students in Basic English can actually read the same material as the students in Standard English, but there will be more emphasis on how to

read the material rather than just on what the material means. For example: Where do you find the thesis on this essay? What are the main points that the author develops? What kinds of examples does he use to convince you of his point? Is there figurative language in the essay, and if so, what purpose does it serve? In a short story: what are the elements of the short story? How many kinds of imagery are there? How does this imagery work? What does it do? How is it related to theme? How do we determine what the theme is? What can we say about the language of the story? And so forth with the other kinds of literature studied.

6. The emphasis in both classes should be on making the students understand that there is a structure and a system to reading and writing. Wholes are made up of parts, and parts are related to each other in certain ways. In both reading and writing there must be a main idea, there must be a thesis, there must be a purpose, there must be supporting details--and these things are true whether we are talking about a poem, a play, a short story, or an essay. What students need to be able to see is that there is a certain unity to verbal communication, that there is some relationship between their writing and their reading, and the writing that others do. One of the ways I do this in my classes is through the processes of "brainstorming" and "categorizing." Essentially, this involves breaking things down into their smallest parts, seeing how those parts relate to each other, then putting the parts together to form a whole The process is much more easily demonstrated than explained, but because it begins at the level of having students toss around simple ideas without regard for formalized structure (such as an outline requires) or even the necessity to express their initial ideas in complete sentences, it tends to free them from the

verbal inhibitions that prevent them from writing or analyzing what they have read. When they begin to see that all writing can start with a kind of free association of words and proceed to categorization and development, then they begin to understand the underlying structural unity of reading and writing and to generalize from one form to another.

7. We must be willing to begin where the students actually are in our classes, not where we think they should be. This means being able to give the students a lot of individual attention. There are a number of ways to accomplish this, some expensive, some relatively inexpensive. The most expensive is that classes must be kept small. A study done at Princeton several years ago and re-substantiated by further research since then indicates that the one single factor that makes any difference in the improvement of student writing is class size. If students are asked to do a great deal of writing which must be evaluated quickly so that they get feedback quickly, basic English cannot be taught in large sections. Optimal size is probably about 15, and no instructor should ever have more than one such section at a time. Extra help is needed too--individual help. One good way to gain this is through the use of student tutors. Any college that has an education major could, with some imagination, create a "student teaching" situation that involves work in a reading and writing lab rather than pure classroom observation and participation. Work-study money is available for tutors at many colleges, which is a relatively inexpensive way of employing students who need to work to help finance their education and of having a cheap supply of tutors at the same time. At some colleges it has even been found possible to have "tutoring" as an education course, with training and supervision, for which students receive credit under some vague title like "supervised teaching." There are many

possibilities--a little creative imagination is needed to seek them out. Some students are even finding the old-fashioned barter system a possible way to "pay" for tutoring.

8. The teaching of reading and writing must keep an affiliation with the English department, even though the content (kinds of writing, reading of texts in the sciences or social sciences) may not be related especially to literature or what we traditionally think of as "English." There have been movements in some English departments in the last several years to do one of two things: create special remedial studies centers or departments to handle these underprepared students, and/or to foist the teaching of writing off to the individual disciplines under the theory that physicists should teach physics major how to write, sociologists should teach sociology majors how to write, etc. Realistically, such a movement is destined to fail. Scientists and social scientists do not want to spend their time teaching students how to write, and they also do not feel competent to do so--and, with few exceptions, probably are not. Second, English departments doom themselves when they let go of the teaching of writing as a discipline; when they stop performing this "service" for the college, they somehow begin to seem very expendable in terms of tenure decisions and new positions.

The idea of creating special remedial studies centers or departments is similarly misguided. First, unless these programs are handled with tact and discretion, students who participate in them quickly become aware of a stigma attached to being in "special" courses. The negative attitudes that many students have towards remedial work or remedial courses is magnified if these courses are offered through a special remedial department or center. Participation in such programs immediately brands the students as "dummies," and they

will resist participation. For the same reason, the instructors who teach basic writing and analytical reading should be regular members of the English department; they should not be para-professionals or left-over high school teachers with minimal qualifications. Again, the students will recognize immediately that second-rate people have been hired to deal with second-rate students. If the regular members of the English department, most of whom were probably trained in an era when they were not expected to deal with such basic communications problems, feel at a loss as to how to teach these students, then an effort must be made to offer them the opportunity to participate in professional development workshops to help them focus on new issues and methods in the teaching of reading and writing at the college level. Teaching these courses is an especially challenging and demanding job, and frequently the intrinsic rewards are less visible and less tangible than those in more traditional courses. This must be compensated for, and the special needs of these students must be made a matter of concern and interest to the English department as a whole, not just to some junior contingent of the faculty which gets "stuck" with the basic writing and analytical reading courses until they've earned the right by means of seniority to move on to the "real thing," which is, of course, literature.

9. Coordination of the "helping services" of the college is a related, important factor. Underprepared students are very adept at "playing the system." In many cases it is what they have been doing instead of studying for twelve years by the time they get to college. What I mean is this: Most colleges these days have an intricate and elaborate network of student support services: deans and assistant deans who counsel students, people who do academic advisement, perhaps a writing clinic, a reading and study skills center, and a whole

raft of personal counselors and psychiatrists to deal with a student's personal problems--to say nothing of individual faculty members, who in the past played all these roles in addition to teaching. Many students who find themselves in academic difficulty in college head for these support services, which is good, and then spend so much time being supported that they never get their work done, which is bad. Somewhere along the way, someone needs to notice that Johnny or Jennie is seeing the dean once a week (because all students in academic difficulty at midterm are required to see the dean once a week); meanwhile, the dean, having noticed that Johnny can't read his textbooks very well has referred him to the reading and study skills center, where he is seeing a reading teacher twice a week; his writing skills are weak, so his English instructor is requiring him to go to the writing lab three times a week; he's so anxious about his school work (or parental pressure, or the fact that his girlfriend just wrote him a Dear John letter) that he can't sleep at night, so he's spending an hour a week in therapy with one of the counsellors...etc., etc. Add it all up, and Johnny is spending at least <u>seven</u> hours a week <u>seeing</u> people who are trying to help him. It's no wonder he doesn't have time to get any studying done, especially when you add those seven hours to the 15 he spends in football practice every week, ... Somewhere along the way, one person needs to coordinate the support services for such students, and while I am not suggesting that the English department take over this particular responsibility, I am suggesting that they be prime movers in an effort to make sure that <u>somebody</u> does.

10. Finally, and in some ways most important, is the whole question of the value of reading and writing. Everyone talks about how Johnny can't read and Jennie can't write, but so far very few colleges have made sensible moves to do anything about it. Not until we

recognize that it is valuable and necessary to teach college level reading skills and give analytical reading courses for good old respectable college credit will the students begin to take the idea seriously. Not until writing achieves something more than second-class status among college teachers and administrators will students actually believe that the ability to write is a valuable skill. Students are constantly told that they need to work hard in Freshman English because they are going to need these writing skills for their other college classes. Is that really true? Do, in fact, history and art history and music and psychology and geology professors comment on the level of writing in their students' papers? And if it isn't true, should the English faculty think about bringing some pressure to bear to make sure that they do notice and comment and grade on the basis of students' writing? What of reading? How can the English faculty incorporate the teaching of reading into freshman English? How can they get faculty members from other disciplines to help them? And finally, what of the attitude of the English department towards the teaching of writing? How many departments in colleges and universities across this country have more writing courses than just in freshman English, (maybe technical writing) and creative writing? Why shouldn't sophomores have a course in expository writing, juniors a course in advanced essay writing, seniors a seminar in various kinds of writing that they will need to know going out into their professions or on to graduate school? Dartmouth, for example, has English 2 (remedial literature and composition), English 5 (standard literature and composition), freshman seminars (all disciplines--writing requirement but not really a course in how to write). Beyond the freshman level, it has English 30, Creative Writing, English 40, Advanced Creative Writing, and English 31, Essay Writing--which is such a "second-class" course that it may not even be counted for

credits towards the English major! And that's it, folks. We claim to be very distressed about the ability of students to write, but for all our talk, we have come forth with precious little action. We do have a course in analytical reading, new this year, and not yet coordinated as should be with English 2--but we're working on it.

To return to my medical metaphor: The patient is treatable, even curable, but all his/her doctors have to work together so that the medication given by one does not cause a bad reaction from the medication given by another. We must admit that the illness is serious but not terminal, that all the life support systems are to be employed but coordinated, that the treatment will be expensive but worth it if we are able to save the patient. Perhaps most importantly, we have to admit that a healthy patient is what we want, that his life is valuable, and that we are willing to make the effort and pay the cost of recovery.

SUGGESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR EFFECTIVE NOTETAKING

Michael Kahn
Rollins College

A necessary, if not essential, study skill for the community college student is the ability to take accurate class lecture notes. It is an important aspect of the learning process simultaneously involving all of the notetaker's learning modalities. The effective notetaker is engaged in listening, writing, editing, organizing, sorting and paraphrasing. It is a study tool which enables the student to consolidate ideas (Henry 1974) and to retain and recall information (Fisher and Harris 1973). It also helps the student focus his/her attention by keeping actively involved in the lecture.

Information provided by a Rollins College survey involving students of 394 senior high and community college teachers indicated that a majority of the students took inadequate lecture notes.

The following portion of this article provides suggestions and activities to help in the instruction of notetaking. The Suggested Responsibility Section contains responsibilities before, during, and after the lecture for both the teacher and the student. The activities which comprise the remainder of this article were suggested by some of the teachers who took part in the initial survey. Many of the activities can either be done individually or with small or large groups of students. Once an activity has been completed, the results should be discussed on the basis of accuracy and conciseness.

Suggested Responsibilities for the Teacher

Before the lecture the teacher should:

1. Explain the benefits derived from effective notetaking.

2. Provide listening readiness activities to help the student determine main ideas and supporting details, key words and phrases, and clue words for organization patterns such as chronological order (first, second, third, then, finally, before, yesterday), comparisons (more, both, as, either, on the other hand), and cause and effect (because, as a result of, since).

3. Provide introductory activities for the lecture by reviewing previous days' lectures and supplying students with sufficient time to review their notes, discussing new and previously introduced vocabulary words and concepts, by previewing the day's lesson, and by suggesting and teaching a shorthand and an abbreviation system using such notations as:

   a. w/ = with
   b. ie = that is
   c. ∴ = therefore
   d. & or + = and
   e. e.g. = for example
   f. = = equal
   g. ≠ = not equal
   h. ↑ = increase
   i. = move portion to place indicated by arrow
   j. ↓ = decrease
   k. > = greater than
   l. < = less than
   m. imp = important
   n. c = about
   o. cf = compare
   p. fg = the following
   q. w/o = without

During the lecture the teacher should:

1. Talk distinctly and at a rate that the student can follow.

2. Give an organized lecture.

3. Stop at periodic intervals and encourage students to ask clarifying questions

4. Give unmistakable clues to identify and emphasize important verbal information such as "This is important," "The main points are," "This could be a test question".

5. Repeat important information.

6. Refer students to important pages in textbook, and use visual devices such as blackboards, overhead projectors and dittos to stress important information.

After the lecture the teacher should:

1. Summarize the lecture and help the students to summarize it.

2. Diagnose students' notetaking skills and when needed prescribe additional instruction.

3. Give students time to edit their notes and to ask any clarifying questions.

Suggested Responsibilities for the Student

Before the lecture the student should:

1. Have the needed writing equipment.

2. Review the previous day's lecture notes.

During the lecture the student should:

1. Listen for main ideas and supporting details, key words, phrases, and organizational clues, and ideas that are emphasized, stressed, or repeated.

2. Copy information that appears on the blackboard or on other visual devices and the teacher's review and summary portion of the lecture.

3. Limit what is written by not writing everything the teacher says.

4. Take notes as concisely and consistently as possible using abbreviations and shorthand notations without being concerned with correct grammar, spelling and complete sentenee structure.

5. Use one spiral notebook per course with page numbers in the upper right hand corner of each page and using a separate page for each day's lecture.

6. Leave sufficient space on each page by skipping lines, keeping wide left and right hand margins and leaving sufficient space on top and bottom of each page.

7. Relate and write what you already know to what is being said during the lecture.

8. Take notes on what other students discuss.

9. Continue taking notes until lecture is over.

10. Ask the teacher to clarify any information and to adjust speaking rate if necessary.

After the lecture the student should:

1. Organize notes immediately by filling in skipped spaces and margins with additional information that clarifies and unifies notes correcting any errors in notes and by underlining key words, phrases, concepts, vocabulary words, names and dates.

2. Write a brief summary of lecture in own words.

ACTIVITIES TO HELP TEACH NOTETAKING SKILLS

1. After the teacher reads a paragraph, the students discuss the main idea and details, organization pattern, fact or opinion statements, and additional information not written that is related to the main idea.

2. After listening to a short lecture, the student chooses 5 items from a list of 10 that were mentioned in the lecture.

3. After teacher gives an unorganized lecture the students discuss how it could have been organized better.

4. Tape a lecture and while it is being played, walk around and help students with their notetaking.

5. Immediately or the day after a lecture, the student attempts to answer questions using just his/her notes.

6. After a lecture, students discuss key words and phrases they have written in their notes.

7. Students divide horizontal edge of notebook paper into a 2 inch section, a 5 inch section, and a 1 inch section (total of

8 inch width of paper). Students can fold paper to provide creases down paper, making sections. During the lecture they take notes in the 5 inch section. After lecture they underline key words, then spell key word in a 2 inch space to left of notes. Then students turn paper on side (edge is horizontal) and summarize notes in 1 inch space. Thus, students have heard, written, underlined, spelled key words, and summarized.

8. Students are given a scrambled outline of that day's or previous day's lecture that they are to organize properly.

Abbreviations and Short Hand Notations

9. Bingo - the student writes abbreviations and notations in the empty squares. The teacher announces the word which the student trys to find on his/her Bingo card.

10. Given a list of important and frequently occurring words, the student devises his own notation and abbreviation system then writes a sentence using these abbreviations and notations which other students try to decode.

11. The teacher writes a sentence on the board which contains many words which could be abbreviated. The student then re-writes it using abbreviations.

Paraphrasing

12. Have the students write a 10 word telegram summarizing the lecture.

13. As a review activity discuss and use the student's paraphrased summary of the previous day's lecture.

14. After each student reads aloud his/her summary of the reading material or lecture, have the class discuss its conciseness and correctness.

15. From the reading material or lecture, the student selects the most accurate and concise summary of five given summaries.

16. Student stands trial and must prove that his/her summary of the reading material or lecture is correct. The class renders the verdict.

17. One word clues are devised and given until other members of the class can guess the reading material or lecture topic from which the clues come.

18. From the reading material, the student underlines all key words and phrases, then, using only these words, writes a summary sentence.

19. Students reading the same material must decide on a paraphrased statement.

20. Students are encouraged to write graffiti, pertaining to the course content, on a bulletin board.

21. Each student is assigned the paraphrasing of a paragraph of an article. These statements are then discussed in the order that they occur in the article.

22. Each taking a turn, students use fewer words in paraphrasing material from an article or lecture.

23. Student rewrites lectures in only 5 sentences.

Determining Main Idea and Supporting Details

24. Student illustrates, in cartoon form, main ideas of a lecture.

25. Bingo with details of a lecture in the bingo squares.

26. Students supply details to a partially compiled outline of a paragraph or lecture.

27. Students write and compare 10 questions covering material in a chapter or from a lecture.

28. Students recall as many facts as they can from material they have just read or heard. Each student then takes a turn telling his fact. Other students having that fact illuminate it. The winner is the student with remaining unmentioned but correct details.

29. Students are given lists of main ideas and details and must place correct details under its main idea (start with 2 main ideas and 10 details). Teacher can then show class how to outline using the main ideas and details.

30. After discussing details the students then supply a main idea or, given the main idea the students supply the details.

31. Select a section of five to six paragraphs from a text. After the students have read it, present them with three statements and ask them to select the one which best expresses the main idea of the section. Statement I has nothing to do with the passage. Statement II is related to the text but is composed of

minor details. Statement III is the best expression of the main idea you can compose OR Statement I contains minor details, Statement II is the main idea expressed poorly Statement III is the main idea expressed well. Have pupils read the paragraphs and discuss the section headings. Suggest other possible headings and have pupils decide why the author selected the headings he did.

32. Students are encouraged to respond to any irrelevant or incorrect details that the teacher intentionally adds to the lecture.

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THE USE OF VIDEOTAPES IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF COMPREHENSION

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Lack of achievement in the traditional humanities course, such as English, history, art, and music, presents a severe problem in a community college where vocationally-oriented students are often required to master a core selection of liberal arts subjects. Students and instructors alike may face frustration in the attempt to create and sustain interest in a subject which by its very nature demands concentration, comprehension of the abstract, and an initial desire to learn on the part of the student.

To foster motivation and achievement in humanities course, videotapes have been developed. Similar to the media of television and films, videotapes are often more effective in presenting information to visual-oriented students. In addition, the use of videotape offers the following advantages:

1. It can offer concrete images in a dramatic fashion in bridging the gap between the "popular" and the "academic."

2. It can present the abstract concepts of a discipline as well as its basic elements. These two, when kept in focus simultaneously, may enable students to retain a holistic grasp at the same time that the basic elements are dissected. In music, for example, the notes on a scale may be examined individually while the entire score or movements of a symphony or concert are kept in focus. Thus, the relationship between the two may be more easily perceived.

3. Technical terminology of literature, art, and

> music can be presented in visual form first, as part of an integrated presentation, before the student encounters the word or phrase in written form. In literature, for example, the metaphor "cold fish," may be conveyed instantaneously through an image while a narrator sustains audio attention by delivering the entire story or poem which may include other examples of metaphors.

The author, in collaboration with colleagues at Queensborough Community College, produced a videotape, "The Fine Art of Seeing." Its purpose was to introduce in layman's terms the techniques employed by artists in the creation of a painting. These are some of the questions the videotape attempted to deal with: Where did the artist derive his notion for the painting? Why did he choose that particular form for conveying his vision and not another one? For what reason did the painter deviate from reality? What do the terms reality and deviate actually mean? The purpose was to arouse sufficient curiousity so that, under additional guidance and questioning from the instructor, students would seek answers through research in a textbook on their own. Another purpose was to study the effects of placing the primary emphasis initially on the videotape, with no supportive reading in the text or instruction through lecture. These would be used later, in varying sequence, at the instructor's discretion, as long as the introduction to the subject of art appreciation through understanding of a painter's motives was accomplished via the visual medium first.

A note about methodology in art appreciation courses. Traditionally, instruction is carried out through the use of slides in combination with lectures. However, the instruction usually follows a

chronological period by period analysis. Because of the vast amount of material to be covered, there is little time or energy in the course of one semester to present an overall view of the realm of art before examining individual works of painters. Therefore, a videotape was developed as a means to introduce the course and to present the painterly techniques of perspective, brushstroke, light, and shade. The time-honored slide lecture format, in collaboration with the text, could then be used to reinforce student knowledge of painter's techniques.

To establish a control group, one group of students was shown the painting, "An Afternoon at LaGrande Jatte," by George Seurat, and then asked to answer the following questions.

1. Name one or more ways in which perspective is achieved in the painting.

2. Name two different textures observable in the painting.

3. What cultural trademarks let you know that this scene takes place in the nineteenth century?

4. Name one or two ways in which this painting shows the cultural and social ideals of the French upper middle class of the nineteenth century.

5. Describe the new painterly technique of pointillisme used in the painting.

6. Name two ways in which the painter has stylized the real scene.

(The underlined terms were discussed in a previous session.)

In the subsequent session, the same group of students were shown the videotape, "The Fine Art of Seeing." Without discussion of the tape or any other follow-up activity, the same group was given the questions to answer again. In collating the results of both sessions, an attempt was made to determine if the tape had produced any perceptual changes in the students' responses.

It was discovered that these students (the central group), used several phrases specifically inserted by the authors into the script of the videotape. For example, in answer to the question "Name one or more ways in which perspective is achieved in the painting," phrases such as "vanishing point," "images fade into the background," suggested that the students had acquired some familiarity with art terminology after viewing the tape, a knowledge that had not been apparent in their earlier responses to the questions when they had not viewed the tape. In responses to a question about texture, "Name two different textures observable in the painting," four students used the term "smooth and rough," or "roughness of the tree bark." An especially telling answer came in response to the question about stylization "Name two different ways in which the painter has stylized the real scene." The term "geometric pattern," appeared on two papers, and one of them elaborated, "A geometric pattern with some realism."

For a second group of students (experimental group), the sequence was extended. In addition to viewing the tape, the experimental group was also asked to read a paragraph composed by the authors of the study that described the painting in a critical and professional manner, similar to the manner confronted by students in a text. Here is that manner paragraph:

An Afternoon at LaGrande Jatte
by George Seurat

"Although Seruat in his painting An Afternoon at LaGrande Jatte (1884) makes use of a new technique of paint application, he still relies heavily on accepted forms of representation. A dramatic sense of perspective, enhanced by striking patterns of light and shade, leads the viewer into the painting. Conventional textures of nature subtly heighten the gaiety of the summer park scene. Figures and objects are clearly recognizable. Yet Seurat deviated from completely realistic representation in his simplification of his figures and objects in the landscape. The sharp, irregular outlines of the individual object lose distinction and definition. A new method of paint application (pointillisme) enables the artist to both simplify and construct the painting. The scene itself depicts a typical afternoon outing of the late nineteenth century, and the lighthearted calm atmosphere is probably the impression the viewer will retain longest."

This time, the purpose was to see if students' perceptions were enhanced in any way after the reading of the paragraph. Several answers appeared which indicated that some students might have copied directly from the paragraph or recalled some phrases through rote. In answer to the question, "Name one or more ways in which perspective is achieved in the painting," "striking patterns of light and shade" appeared on four papers, "Dramatic sense of perspective" appeared on two. In answer to the questions on texture, "conventonal textures of nature"

appeared on three papers. It is, of course, difficult to determine to what extent the students had mastery of these phrases before using them. We assumed, at the least, that there was an addition to their recognition vocabulary in art. The students knew when to "press the right button," in answer to a question. To prevent any distortion, the phrases would require further elaboration and example in class on the part of an instructor.

In studying the students' responses, we tended to discount answers that seemed to be "parrotted," and gave more weight to those that appeared creative and interpretive. The final question and its illustrative answers may serve as a further example. In reference to the painter's attempts to stylize, "Name two ways in which the painter has stylized the real scene," at least four answers included the term, "simplify and construct." Since this was precisely the wording used in the paragraph, there was less weight assigned to this answer. Answers such as "sharp, irregular outlines," and "deviates completely from realistic representation," were indicative of situations in which we thought the student was making creative use of the tape and paragraph. To assign a balanced score, a relative scale of weights was assigned for each type of answer:

1. Style related terms, such as details, technique, image, paints, dots, strokes, etc., whether used with interpretative knowledge or not, received one point. In the same manner, a sensitivity to technical terms was also recognized, but given this low rating on the scale if it was determined that the terms were used with a minimum of application and only a surface understanding. These included terms such as "blending", "perspective", "reality", "symbolize",

and "geometrical shapes".

2. "Purpose-related" items - Those answers in which the student attempted to provide some insight into what the painter was attempting to accomplish, a conscious or sub-conscious attempt to deal with the painter-viewer relationship. Answer which included such phrases as: "tree-branches guide you toward the river," "light is also used for this purpose," and "perspective achieved by the colors," received appropriate credit.

3. Value-judgments - Those answers which involved a taste preference, with substantial reasons for the student's evaluation, received the next highest score. Answers which made use of phrases such as "a good abstraction, the trees have no trunks," "an appealing gay and light-hearted atmosphere," "figures which are aristocratic because of the way they carry themselves," were deemed to be more original in perception and more reasoned in outlook.

4. Creative use of the tape - This type of answer received the highest score on the theory that it is the most difficult type of response to exhibit in the brief transition time allowed. Although rare, nevertheless answers such as the following did appear: The figures "lose distinction and definition," the painter "puts viewer into a relaxed mood," the effect is like "looking into a mirror and seeing the other side of yourself." (The original script of the tape included a description of a Picasso painting, "Woman in the Mirror," in which a similar phrase about double reflections of personality was used. Hopefully, the student had added to his repertoire of descriptive phrases after viewing the tape, and had made a relevant

association to the phrase at an appropriate point to the questioning.)

It was difficult to be statistically precise in totalling point values for the various levels of answers. The very nature of the subject of art appreciation makes it difficult to conform to a formula. In measuring student responses, however it was possible to distinguish between the "informed" reply, and the uninformed, the answers which made use of the materials, or at least attempted to, and those that did not, and the answers which exhibited a slight familiarity with technical terms after a brief exposure to them, and those that did not achieve the "recognition" level of response. In general, the tape did have a measurable effect on the nature of student response; the paragraph also had an effect. We were more concerned with the interaction between the two, to what extent the viewing of the tape conditioned and provided a framework for student interpretation of the paragraph.

While only a crude study, some tentative suggestions regarding similar projects may be offered at this point.

1. In any combination of tape and reading materials, maximum effect appeared to be gained when the tape was viewed first. The domination and hold that the printed media seems to have on student minds makes it difficult for them to read a selection related to their own reading purposes without consciously trying to imitate the wording, style, or approach of a critic who may be a lofty and unattainable height of professional achievement from the perspective of a student. We have seen the same type of mimetric rote reproduction when students are asked to search for answers in a text. The tape

at least ameliorated this response by providing a more familiar and comfortable medium from which to assimilate information on stylistic terms and artistic approaches. Using the same set of questions, we tended to find fewer imitative answers after students viewed the tape than was the case after they had read the paragraph.

2. The students' ability to interpret for artist's purpose, offer value judgments, and make creative use of the materials, appeared more in evidence when they were not intimidated by the written paragraph. Again, the tape seemed to facilitate accumulation of information from a text, and was less inhibiting in eliciting student response.

3. In any Humanities subject requiring a knowledge of content and technique (i.e. Art, Music, Literature, Dance, Drama, Speech), it may be useful to rely upon the text for content, and the tape for appreciation of technique. Using the camera a as the "eye" of the viewer, and having it travel across a painting, appears to provide a livelier introduction to a work of art than pre-assigning selected portions of a text. The supportive written material, with additional information on methods and technique, may then be implemented with less psychological resistance on the part of the student.